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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
IN ALBERTA SCHOOL DIVISIONS AND COUNTIES

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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by

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this thesis is to analyze the role presently being played by those persons in the position of assistant superintendent in Alberta School Divisions and Counties. The term assistant superintendent refers to those whose duties involve assistance to the provincially employed superintendents. These officers may bear such titles as supervisors of instruction, co-ordinator of instruction, or assistant superintendent. This analysis of role includes an outline of the specific functions being performed by these officers and a description of the part they consider they are playing in the supervisory and administrative process.

The data required for this analysis were obtained by the structured interview procedure. An interview schedule was prepared based on a study of Board expectations for superintendents. It was hypothesized that assistant superintendents would perform some of the functions expected of superintendents. Interviews were carried out with all of the assistant superintendents employed by School Divisions and Counties in 1959-60 except in one instance where a previous incumbent of the position was substituted.

The purpose of the office of assistant superintendent appears to be to improve the educational situation within

the school and to assist in informing the public of the educational situation in order to enlist support. In order to achieve this purpose the assistant superintendent is active in the fields of instructional leadership, public relations and pupil guidance. In these fields he visits classrooms, organizes study groups, projects and institutes, interprets and develops curricula, exerts leadership through Principals' Associations, uses pupil guidance tools, and attempts to inform the public of the schools' work and achievements.

The data appear to indicate that the major obstacle to the satisfactory achievement of this purpose lies in the lack of understanding by employers and the public of the nature and possible effects of supervision. The significance of professional leadership as opposed to authoritative supervision is apparently not understood.

The data indicate that a number of well trained and capable educators are employed in this position. Their functions could perhaps be performed by principals and superintendents. However, the shortage of adequately trained personnel available for appointment as principals and the limitations placed on this office and on that of the superintendent make the appointment of assistant superintendents necessary. The appointment of an assistant superintendent appears to be an effective way of improving the learning situation within the schools of certain areas of this province.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem	1
Statement of the problem	1
Statement of the sub-problems	2
Hypothesis	3
An assumption	3
Delimitation of the study	4
Need for the study	5
II. A THEORY OF ROLE ANALYSIS	7
Historical development of role theory	8
Definition of terms	11
A theory of role analysis	12
A review of some related studies	14
III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY	18
Kinds of information required	18
Description of the instrument	19
Reliability and validity of the instrument	21
Treatment of the data	22
IV. THE DATA	24
Historical development	24
Summary of interview data	29

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	47
Purpose of the organization	47
Purpose of the assistant superintendent	48
Needs and expectations of Boards and superintendents	50
Consensus of expectations of assistant superintendents	52
Conflicts between role definitions	53
Individuality of the role	54
Departmental control	55
Personal and professional characteristics of assistant superintendents	56
VI. SYNTHESIS, IMPLICATIONS, FURTHER RESEARCH	59
Synthesis of the role of assistant superintendent	59
Implications of this study	64
Need for further research	66
Conclusion	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
APPENDIX	71

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I.	Frequency of Assistant Superintendents Accepting Major Responsibility in Each of Five Supervisory or Administrative Areas . .	30
II.	Rank Score of Importance Attached to each of Five Supervisory or Administrative Areas by Assistant Superintendents	31
III.	Frequency of Positive Responses to Selected Items Concerning Activities of Assistant Superin- tendents in the Field of Instructional Leadership	32
IV.	Frequency of Positive Responses by Assistant Superintendents to Questions Concerning the Selection and Management of School Personnel	35
V.	Frequency of Positive Responses by Assistant Superintendents to Selected Questions Concerning Pupil Personnel and Guidance Activities	36
VI.	Summary of Responses by Assistant Superin- tendents to Questions Concerning Adminis- tration, Organization and Finance	39

TABLE

PAGE

VII.	Rating Scores on Questions Put to Assistant Superintendents Concerning Public Relations Activities	41
VIII.	Personal and Professional Characteristics of the Incumbents of the Position of Assistant Superintendent in Alberta During the School Year 1959-60	45

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years students of educational administration have endeavored to examine the functions of the incumbents of a number of supervisory positions. These studies have been inspired to some degree at least by a desire for a clearer concept of how educational opportunities may be improved by efficient administrative and supervisory procedures. The tide favoring an efficient but democratic supervisory program has been at the flood. However it appears that the well established offices of principal and provincially appointed superintendent have not been fully capable of providing the desired services in all areas. One of the ways by which Boards of Trustees, perhaps on the advice of the above mentioned officers and other Department of Education officials, have tried to meet their needs is by employing officers to assist the superintendent and the staff in improving the learning situation. In the following pages an attempt will be made to describe and analyze the services that one such type of officer is rendering.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The problem of this thesis is to analyze the role presently being played by the limited

number of assistant superintendents employed by Divisional Boards and County School Committees in Alberta. This analysis will include a description of the role assistant superintendents believe they are playing, an outline of the specific functions they are fulfilling, and a consensus of the role they believe they should be filling. The analysis will be related to some extent to the expectations held by the employing Boards, the supervising superintendents, and the professional body as a whole.

Statement of the sub-problems. In the course of the study it will be necessary to investigate the following questions as the analysis of the role of the assistant superintendent is developed.

1. The historical development of the position of assistant superintendent as revealed by Department of Education documents.

2. The function of the superintendent as revealed by a study of the expectations held for this officer by Divisional Boards and County School Committees.

3. The relationship between the assistant superintendent and the superintendent employed by the Province of Alberta.

4. The acceptance of the assistant superintendent by the teachers and by the teachers' professional organization.

5. The control exerted by the Department of Education over

the selection, appointment, and function of an assistant superintendent.

6. The personal and professional characteristics of those persons presently employed as assistant superintendents in Alberta School Divisions and Counties.

Hypothesis. This study is based on the hypothesis that assistant superintendents are employed by Boards and School Committees to perform some of the functions that have regularly been expected by these bodies to have been performed by the provincially appointed superintendents. It is hypothesized that at this time assistant superintendents are employed to complement the services rendered by the superintendents, to extend existing services rather than to render independent services designed to meet new needs or to replace the services rendered by other officers. This hypothesis will be tested as the analysis of the role is developed. The design of the study is based on this hypothesis.

An assumption. An assumption is made in connection with the collection of data relative to the role under analysis. It is assumed that the interviewees will be frank and honest in their responses to the questions asked. Every precaution possible will be taken to ensure rapport and to ensure an understanding of the questions. Since there are

relatively few assistant superintendents employed by Divisional Boards or County School Committees these precautions are felt to be of prime importance.

Delimitation of the study. This study is limited to the analysis of the role of the assistant superintendent employed by Divisional Boards and by County School Committees in Alberta. This limitation may be justified for the following reasons. There are differences in facilities, financial resources, Departmental attitude and control, and in the nature of the problems requiring solutions between the cities and the rural areas of Alberta. There are similar differences between provinces and between other political units. These differences place differing functions on the supervisory officers employed and require different relations between these officers. For these reasons it is necessary to limit the study of the role of the assistant superintendent to a specified kind of situation.

A second limitation concerns the source of the data from which the analysis will be developed. These data will be obtained from the assistant superintendents presently employed. While the interview schedule used to obtain data is based on a study of the expectations of employing Boards, and while this instrument was tested for reliability and validity through provincial superintendents, the fact remains

that the ultimate sources of the data to be used in the analysis of this role will come from the incumbents of the position. This limitation may be justified by referring to the central problem. Further research may be necessary before a complete analysis of this role is evident. This study is designed to describe as accurately as possible the role as it is presently being played. It will become evident as the analysis develops that the only persons fully conversant with the role at this time are those who are incumbent in the position. As the position develops, further research may be necessary to determine the expectations held by those in counter positions but at this time there appears to be little chance of achieving consensus among these persons.

Need for the study. It is apparent that the people of Alberta are not fully satisfied with the learning being accomplished by the children of this province. The recent Royal Commission report and the very considerable space given to educational matters by newspapers and periodicals testifies to this discontent. Some Divisional Boards and County School Committees have committed a considerable amount of money and the services of a number of well trained individuals to the position of assistant superintendent. It appears to be important then, that this position, which involves a

considerable investment of money and personnel, should be examined in terms of the educational benefit being received. If the incumbents of the position are found to be contributing substantially to the improvement of the learning situation then perhaps further investment might be desirable. On the other hand the investigation may show that services are being duplicated or that the educational returns are not commensurate with the investment involved. This study is intended to provide those responsible for making decisions relative to the employment of such officers with a body of material which may assist them in this responsibility.

CHAPTER II

A THEORY OF ROLE ANALYSIS

The study of the actual behavior of an incumbent of a position within a social organization in relation to his expectations, the expectations of him held by others in the organization and the possible conflicts between these expectations may be termed role analysis. In recent years society has become increasingly complex. Social organizations are increasing in scope. This increase in complexity and scope is particularly true in the field of educational organization in rural Alberta. The introduction of the organizational structures known as School Divisions and, more recently, County systems has made it more difficult for an incumbent of a particular position in these organizations to learn what is expected of him. This thesis is an attempt to analyze the role being played by those presently filling the position of assistant superintendent. In order to carry out such an analysis one must have a background of theory or a conceptual framework which will postulate the concepts necessary to understand adequately and describe the role being studied. This chapter will review the development of the techniques of role analysis and some of the attempts to apply these techniques to administrative and supervisory positions in the field of education.

Historical development of role theory. William James in 1892 perhaps was one of the first to verbalize a role concept. He said, "The particular social self of a man is his image in the eyes of his own 'set' which exalts or condemns him as he conforms or not to certain requirements."¹ This seems to imply at the outset that these "requirements" are known or can be determined apart from a study of the individual incumbent in the position. Neiman and Hughes² in 1951 surveyed some eighty different sources which used the concept "role". They reached the conclusions of which some are summarized below.

1. Prior to 1940 the role concept was more of an abstract generalization than a research tool.

2. The concept at the time of writing was still vague, nebulous, and non definitive.

3. In the literature of empirical research by far the greatest amount of research has been in sociometry.

4. There is an increasing trend toward associating the role concept with that of status.

5. There are few if any predictive studies of human behavior involving the role concept.

¹William James, Psychology, Henry Holt, New York, 1892, p. 181.

²Lionel J. Neiman and James W. Hughes, "The Problem of the Concept of Role - A Re-survey of the Literature", "Social Forces." Vol. XXX 1951, pp. 149 et. seq.

These conclusions seem to be necessary if one accepts the notion that the requirements of a role are not determined, at least in part, by the incumbent of the position.

As a representative of those who associate the role concept with that of status one might cite Ralph Linton. He says:

A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status. The individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When he puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role.³

Everett Hughes following the same vein stated that: "Status, in its active and conscious aspect, is an elementary form of office. An office is a standardized group of duties and privileges devolving upon a person in certain defined situations."⁴ Both Linton and Hughes imply that a role is a more or less fixed set of behaviors once the position or status is defined. This static concept of role tends to limit research to position defining rather than role analysis.

Sarbin suggests that "role theory regards human conduct as the product of the interaction of self and role."⁵

³Ralph Linton, The Study of Man, Appleton-Century, New York, 1936, p. 114.

⁴Everett C. Hughes, "Institutional Office and the Person", American Journal of Sociology, 43 (November, 1937) p. 413.

⁵Theodore R. Sarbin, "Role Theory", Gardner Lindzey Editor, Handbook of Social Psychology, Volume I.

This implies that the incumbent of the position has some effect on the nature of the role he will play. However, Sarbin apparently considers that society defines the role and that the "interaction" refers to how well the incumbent fits the defined role. The interaction is peripheral to the basic role definition. Gross, Mason and McEachern⁶ in 1958 question the validity of the assumption that society has a role consensus for a particular position. They suggest that the study of the role of any class of incumbents of a position should include a study of their actual performances, their own expectations, and the expectations of those occupying other positions within or without the organization. A role may be defined in terms of each of these aspects or in relation to all of them. They point out there will continue to be ambiguity in role definition unless the role definers are clearly specified. One must insist on clear answers to the questions--consensus on what? and consensus among whom?

It is on the basis of this most recent concept of role theory that this study will proceed. An attempt will be made to determine what functions assistant superintendents believe they are filling, what functions they believe they

⁶Neal Gross, Ward S. Mason, Alexander W. McEachern. Explorations in Role Analysis. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1958, p. 30 et. seq.

should be filling, and what they believe their relationships to be with the incumbents of other positions in the educational organization. The assistant superintendents will be the role definers. However, an attempt will be made to have these officers define their role in relation to the expectations of their employing Boards and supervising superintendents.

Definition of terms. Since the concepts of role and of role analysis have had such a varied and controversial history it appears necessary that the terms to be used in an outline of a theory of role analysis be specifically defined. For the purposes of this thesis the terms used are defined as follows.

1. Formal organization. A formal organization is a social system designed to attain specific goals.

2. Position. A position is the location of an actor in a formal organization.

3. A role. A role is the expected behavior of an actor or a class of actors occupying social positions.

4. Expectations. Expectations are evaluative standards of behavior applied to an incumbent of a position. These standards may be applied by the incumbent of the position or by the incumbents of other positions within or without the organization.

5. Role definer. Role definers are those who describe the role of an incumbent of a position in terms of expectations.

Using the terms as defined, this thesis is an attempt to analyze the role of the incumbents of the position of assistant superintendent of schools in the social organizations known as School Divisions or Counties. This analysis will be made in terms of the expectations of the assistant superintendents who will be the role definers.

A theory of role analysis. In order to set out criteria against which a role in a formal organization may be analyzed it is necessary to describe the nature of such an organization. Gross, Mason, and McEachern⁷ offer a rather complete description of a formal organization. The essential points of their description are:

1. The organization is designed to attain a goal.
2. To attain this goal the organization is divided into positions charged with the accomplishment of specific tasks.
3. The functions of the incumbent(s) of a position are to behave in a manner calculated to perform his task(s).
4. These tasks and positions are interrelated. The behavior or role of an incumbent of a position can not be

⁷Ibid., pp. 122-123.

performed in isolation from the roles of the incumbents of other positions.

5. The role of the incumbent of a particular position will be defined by the incumbent himself, the incumbents of other positions in the hierarchy, and by others associated with the organization. These role definitions will be made in terms of expectations.

It will be seen from this outline of a formal organization that the actual role of the individual occupying a position can only be understood as behavior determined by the interaction of actors in social locations. As Getzels and Guba put it,

To understand the behavior of specific role incumbents in an institution, we must know both the role expectations and the need dispositions. Indeed, needs and expectations may both be thought of as motives for behavior, the one deriving from personal propensities, the other from institutional requirements. What we call social behaviors may be conceived as ultimately deriving from the interaction between two sets of motives.⁸

In order then to analyze the role of the assistant superintendent who is the incumbent of a position in a formal organization the following criteria must be met.

1. The purpose of the School Division or County organization must be described.
2. The purpose of the position of assistant superintendent

⁸J. W. Getzels, E. G. Guba, "Social Behavior and the Administrative Process" The School Review, Vol. LXV, Dec. 1957, University of Chicago Press, p. 428.

in this organization must be determined.

3. The role must be defined as far as possible in terms of the needs and expectations of the Board or School Committee and the superintendent.

4. The role must be defined in terms of the consensus of the expectations of the incumbents of the position.

5. The implicit conflicts if any between the role definitions of the incumbents of the position and the definitions of others must be made explicit.

6. The individuality of the role of each incumbent of the position must be realized so that variations in role definition and in role conflict will not be described as generalizations when they are in fact particular.

Before describing the design of this particular study some other attempts at role analysis in the field of education in Alberta will be examined. The criteria set out above will be kept in mind as these studies are reviewed.

A review of some related studies. Probably the most significant attempt at role analysis in the field of education in recent years is that of Collins.⁹ His dissertation is a conscientious attempt to analyze a specific role.

⁹Cecil Patrick Collins, "The Role of the Provincially Appointed Superintendent of Schools in Larger Units of Administration in Canada", (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Alberta, 1958.)

Collins approached the task of describing the purpose of the social organization and the position under study by examining the Statutes governing the educational organization in a number of provinces. This legalistic approach to the function of the superintendent was necessary to determine the expectations of the employing Government Departments. Collins then proceeded to question a very large number of incumbents of the position to determine their role in terms of their own expectations. The magnitude of the problem attacked and the volume of data obtained made the task of analyzing the role in detail practically insurmountable. Collins was most successful in making explicit the conflicts in role definition resulting from the statutory requirement that the superintendent act as a line officer of his Department of Education and as a staff officer to the Board of Trustees with whom he is associated. The number of respondents to the questionnaire used in this study precluded any attempt to consider the individuality of the role as played by the incumbents concerned. This study indicates that a great deal more research in this field is necessary before the role of the provincially appointed superintendent can be adequately analyzed.

One piece of research arising out of the study by Collins is that of Finlay.¹⁰ Finlay has made a specific

¹⁰Finlay, John. "School Board Expectations for the

study of School Board expectations for the role of the provincially appointed superintendent. The results of his inquiry into these expectations were used in the present study as a basis for the interview schedule prepared to determine the areas in which the assistant superintendents are active and to determine what specific acts they perform in these areas. Finlay's study will be referred to later in the section dealing with the design of this study.

Enns,¹¹ in 1959, attempted to describe the role of the vice-principal in Alberta Divisional and County schools. His study was not exactly a role analysis but rather assumed a certain role for the vice-principal. The research was designed to determine whether or not the incumbents of the position were fulfilling the assumed role. The conclusion that the potentialities of this role are not being realized may indicate that the institutional purpose of the position should be examined and perhaps redefined. The expectations of those in counter positions and the expectations of the incumbents of the position perhaps should also be explicitly examined.

Role of the Provincially Appointed School Superintendent," incomplete Master of Education Thesis, University of Alberta, 1961. Cited by permission.

¹¹Frederick Enns, "A Survey of the Present Status of the Vice-Principal in Alberta Divisional and County Schools". Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, University of Alberta, 1959.

These studies indicate that the problem of role analysis is being attacked. McCall¹² in 1956 surveyed the organization and procedures of supervision in Alberta Public Schools. This study indicated the institutional purposes of a number of positions in the Alberta educational organization. He brought forth considerable evidence to support the contention that the supervisory services in Alberta require expansion. He suggests,

Further research into the optimum load of a superintendent as far as his administrative and supervisory duties are concerned, and, in connection with this, consideration of the advisability of appointing an assistant or assistants to the superintendents to whom specific duties could be delegated.¹³

This brief review of related studies gives some indication of the nature of the studies that have already been conducted in the field of role analysis as it concerns the educational organization. This review also indicates the need for further and more specific research into the roles of supervisory officers.

¹²Horace Filmore McCall, "Organization and Procedures of Supervision in the Alberta Public Schools". Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Oregon State College, 1956.

¹³Ibid., pp. 37-38

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In this chapter the nature of the information required for the analysis of the role of assistant superintendent will be described. The instrument to be used to obtain this information will be presented together with some evidence that it is satisfactory for the purpose. An outline will be made of how this information is to be organized so that an analysis of the role may be carried out. Finally a description of the manner in which the information thus gathered and organized will be used to synthesize and evaluate the role presently being played by the assistant superintendents employed by Divisional Boards and County School Committees in Alberta.

Kinds of information required. Some historical information concerning when and where this position first emerged in Alberta will be required. This information will be obtained from the Annual Reports of the Department of Education. This source will provide general information concerning the reasons for the development of this office but more detailed research into this aspect of the position might be undertaken in a study specifically designed to describe the development of supervisory offices in this

province. The purpose here is to provide a background against which to examine the present situation.

The information required to provide answers to the principal and subordinate problems must come from the incumbents of the position. The kinds of information to be obtained from this source may be categorized as (1) Areas in which these officers are active and the relative importance assigned by the incumbents to these areas of activity. (2) Specific acts performed by these officers. (3) Information concerning the nature of the functions these officers feel they should fill. (4) Information concerning the relationships between the incumbents of the position under study and the incumbents of counter positions. (5) Information concerning the personal and professional attributes of the officers.

Description of the instrument. Since there are only eleven assistant superintendents employed by Divisional Boards or County School Committees in Alberta the structured interview procedure was considered the most likely to elicit the required information. An interview schedule, a copy of which is included in Appendix A, was developed. This schedule is based on the data obtained by Finlay¹⁴ in his

¹⁴Finlay, op. cit.

study of the expectations held by School Board members in Alberta for provincially appointed superintendents. The majority of Trustees expect that superintendents should bear considerable responsibility in the following fields: (1) Instructional leadership, (2) Selection and management of teaching personnel, (3) Pupil personnel and guidance, (4) Administration, organization and finance, (5) Public relations. The responsibility in these areas may be independent, directed or advisory but in each of the areas mentioned Trustees apparently feel that the superintendent should be involved. Assuming that the assistant superintendent is employed to assist the superintendent in the performance of his functions the first objective of the interview was to find out in which of these areas the assistant superintendents are active. The relative importance of each area to his overall role was sought. The next step in the interview was to elicit responses concerning specific acts performed in each of the areas of responsibility assumed by the interviewees. This section was prepared to elaborate on and to act as a check on the answers given to the preceding questions concerning areas of responsibility. The third objective of the interview was to establish the relationship between what the interviewee is doing with the role he feels he should be filling. The fourth part of the interview schedule was designed to indicate the relationship between

the assistant superintendent and the superintendent and the relationship between the assistant superintendent and the teachers. This section was also designed to discover how well the incumbents feel that School Boards in particular and the public in general are informed about the functions and nature of the task undertaken by those acting as assistant superintendents. The fifth section of the interview schedule was purposely kept less structured than the previous sections. While one is either a member or not a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, a description of the degree of acceptance and one's concept of one's position in this organization is quite subjective. The final section was designed to indicate if possible the type of individual both professionally and generally who might be expected to be employed in this position.

Reliability and validity of the instrument. After the interview schedule was prepared it was submitted to two professors of the Division of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta for suggestions and criticism. Some minor revisions were made. The interviewer then tested the schedule by carrying out interviews with two provincially appointed superintendents who work with Boards who employ assistant superintendents. One of the superintendents interviewed had been an assistant

superintendent before accepting his present position. These gentlemen offered several suggestions for the improvement of wording and they provided excellent experience for the interviewer in his attempt to learn how to elicit answers to the questions he had in mind. These superintendents agreed that the interview if carried out as scheduled should elicit the desired information. The data obtained from these superintendents were compared with the data subsequently obtained from their assistants. These two sets of data were identical except that the superintendents attributed a greater degree of effectiveness to the assistant's actions than he did himself. The precautions outlined and the comparison between the data obtained from the superintendents and that obtained from their assistants seem to indicate that the instrument used to gather the necessary information is both reliable and valid.

Treatment of the data. The data obtained from the interviewees was written down in abbreviated form as the interview progressed. Immediately following each interview these data were summarized in a data record book. From this record of the answers to the questions put to the interviewees two kinds of summaries will be presented in this thesis. The first of these involving both verbal and graphical forms is presented as a description of the role

presently being played by the incumbents of this position. Whenever possible this description will show the consensus of the responses concerning the duties and responsibilities of the assistant superintendents. The second type of summary will involve a somewhat subjective evaluation of these duties and responsibilities. This evaluation will be based on presently accepted objectives and methods of administration and supervision. The first portion of this treatment of the data will attempt to describe the role and the second will attempt to evaluate the role as described. This description and evaluation is essentially what is meant by the expression "role analysis". From this analysis certain conclusions and implications will be evolved and presented. Finally, this treatment of the data will indicate areas where further research may appear to be necessary.

CHAPTER IV

THE DATA

This chapter includes verbal and graphical summaries of the data obtained from the assistant superintendents employed by School Division Boards and County School Committees in Alberta. These data were obtained through the structured interview procedure. The average length of time taken to complete each interview was approximately one and one-half hours. These interviews were conducted during the summer of 1960. The interviewer was successful in obtaining interviews with all the assistant superintendents employed during the school year 1959-60 excepting one. In this instance an interview was arranged with the former incumbent of this position. As an introduction to this summary of data a review of the development of the position is presented.

Historical development. According to the Annual Reports of the Department of Education of the Province of Alberta the position which is called assistant superintendent in this thesis has gradually emerged from a need felt by superintendents in the field. This need developed out of the changes in administrative unit, the resulting possibilities for improved educational opportunities and out of the changes in the nature and philosophy of supervision.

The result of these changes appears to be that in some areas superintendents felt a need for help in their attempts to utilize the new administrative unit to realize the educational opportunities now possible. With the gradual discarding of the authoritative type of supervision and with the developing of more democratic and cooperative methods some superintendents found the load in their areas burdensome. By 1951,

In a few divisions supervisors of instruction were employed to assist the superintendent in such matters as supervision of correspondence centres, guidance, testing program, or coordinating of instruction in special fields such as Art and Music.¹⁵

It is interesting to follow the development of these references to assistance to the superintendents in the Reports since that date. In 1953 a subsection of the Chief Superintendent's portion of the Annual Report was devoted to this matter.

(e) Assistance from Supervising Teachers, Special Supervisors, or Assistant Superintendents.

Three superintendents had the help of assistant superintendents for periods between one and five months during the year. Each one so assisted indicated that the services rendered had been extremely valuable. This assistance was mainly directed toward the visitation of schools to which the superintendent had been unable to give sufficient attention. If the services of an assistant superintendent were available for a

¹⁵Province of Alberta, Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1951, Queen's Printer for Alberta, Edmonton, p. 18.

longer period of time a better organized program of supervision could be developed in many divisions. The pressure of the superintendent's manifold duties often does not permit this.¹⁶

This Report goes on a paragraph later to describe some particular duties assumed by these officers.

. . . The most complete supervisory assistance prevailed in the St. Mary's River Division, where a Supervisor of Instruction is employed. The superintendent states that in many visits made by the supervisor to schools he has spent much time with beginning and weaker teachers and has helped with the testing program, has aided in raising the standard of enterprize work to a commendable level, has investigated troublesome problems, has met with local boards, parents and representatives on school affairs, and has aided in the whole in-service training program of the Division. The superintendent concluded that such a person is, without any doubt, of great help in improving the nature and quality of teaching.¹⁷

In the 1954 Report a considerable expansion of the type of assistance described as occurring in the St. Mary's River Division was noted. Some indication as to how the duties of the assistant superintendent are established was also given:

In the Clover Bar, High Prairie, Lacombe and St. Mary's River Divisions full time supervisors of instruction are employed. Their duties are established by cooperative planning with the superintendent. These officials may supervise extensive testing programs, encourage suitable follow up procedures, or give attention to in-service training of teachers by spending

¹⁶Province of Alberta, Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1953, Queen's Printer for Alberta, Edmonton, p. 27-28.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

considerable time in the classrooms. There also may be time for considerable guidance work, both of individual teachers and groups of teachers and for assisting the supervisors in correspondence centres. The Divisional Supervisor can assist in planning their work and help teachers who have recently come from places outside the Province. He may assist teachers in centralized and one-room schools to organize and carry out remedial programs. While there is considerable dissimilarity in the duties entrusted to him in these divisions, all superintendents are agreed that the employment of this official has made it possible to improve supervision and to relieve the superintendent of considerable detail.¹⁸

In 1955 the picture varied somewhat. There were three Supervisors of Instruction, three helping teachers, one remedial teacher and one relieving teacher employed by School Divisions. This seems to indicate that the need for assistance for the superintendent was becoming more widely felt but that the nature of the assistance needed had not yet crystallized. In 1956 the Report indicates some of the qualifications required for the incumbents of the position of assistant superintendent.

The qualifications for this position include a sound academic background, successful teaching experience, a cooperative attitude, ability to inspire confidence among teachers, and a magnetic personality.¹⁹

The 1957 Report showed a growth in auxiliary super-

¹⁸Province of Alberta, Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1954, Queen's Printer for Alberta, Edmonton, p. 28.

¹⁹Province of Alberta, Fifty-First Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1956, Queen's Printer for Alberta, Edmonton, p. 26.

visory officers to include two assistant superintendents, five supervisors of instruction, and a variety of subject supervisors. In 1958 the figures rose to three assistant superintendents, six supervisors of instruction, and a number of subject supervisors. The general description of the nature of their duties remained the same. The supervisory personnel were assigned and expected to carry forward under the direction of the superintendent duties similar to those indicated in previous Reports. In 1959, there were eleven supervisory officers other than subject supervisors employed by Divisional Boards and County School Committees. While the titles assigned to these officers varied for the purposes of this thesis they will be referred to as assistant superintendents.

This review of the development of this position as revealed by the Annual Reports might be considered in itself a description of the role of this officer. However, when one examines more fully the role as played by each of the eleven officers employed during the school year 1959-60 one notes that a variety of needs are being met and there are significant differences in the ways in which duties are being performed. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to summarizing the specific activities of these eleven officers. The remaining chapters will attempt to analyze these data and synthesize as far as possible the

role which may be played by the incumbents of this position.

Summary of interview data. The interviews carried out according to the schedule described in Chapter III produced the information which is summarized in the following pages. It was found that some of the assistant superintendents were active in each of the supervisory and administrative areas in which Boards appear to expect superintendents to be active. Table I indicates the number of assistant superintendents who accepted a major responsibility in each of the five areas. Table II, page 31, indicates the rank assigned to each of these areas using a score of 5 for a rank of first, 4 for second, 3 for third, 2 for fourth, and 1 for fifth.

An examination of the data concerning the specific kinds of supervisory or administrative acts performed by the interviewees in the areas in which they are active reveals two kinds of information. The first of these indicates what is actually being done and the second reveals the circumstances under which the interviewees are performing their duties. Items 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, of Part A of the interview schedule required definite answers concerning what is being done in the field of instructional leadership. The answers to these questions are summarized in Table III, page 32. The information concerning the circumstances or degree of participation in these activities does not lend itself to

TABLE I
FREQUENCY OF ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS
ACCEPTING MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY
IN EACH OF FIVE SUPERVISORY
OR ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS

Title of Area	Frequency n = 11
Instructional Leadership	11
Selection and Management of Personnel	5
Pupil Guidance	8
Administration, Organization and Finance	3
Public Relations	11

TABLE III

FREQUENCY OF POSITIVE RESPONSES TO SELECTED ITEMS
 CONCERNING ACTIVITIES OF ASSISTANT
 SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE FIELD OF
 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
 N = 11

Question	Frequency of Positive Response
Do you visit classrooms and confer with teachers?	11
Do you organize study groups, projects, or institutes?	10
Do you evaluate the work of teachers and write reports?	3
Do you participate or exert leadership in curriculum interpretation and development?	10
Do you participate in the planning of the program of instruction offered in high schools?	8
Do you play an active role in the Principals' Association?	11

objective treatment. The information obtained in this connection is presented in the form of quotations, paraphrases of responses or statements of consensus as understood by the interviewer.

Classrooms for visitation are generally selected on the assistant's own initiative but in nearly every instance this selection is subject to the agreement of the superintendent. Teacher invitation is given priority and encouragement. In some instances the type of classroom or type of lesson is restricted. Some are limited to elementary classrooms, one is limited to the high school, and one limits his visitations to lessons in his subject specialty.

The organization of study groups, projects and institutes is generally a joint superintendent--assistant superintendent development with the ideal being for the need to originate with the classroom teacher. The assistant superintendent arranges for the time, place, personnel, and facilities. This ideal is, however, not often reached without considerable leadership being exerted by the assistant superintendent.

A number of the interviewees report other activities in this field such as the issuing of teaching technique bulletins, providing advice and materials for remedial work, for science activities, and for library development. Some assistants also provide assistance with internship programs,

with the education of teachers in more modern ways of dealing with individual differences, and with special subjects such as music. Some assistance is also rendered to teachers in the development of research programs.

The data obtained from Section B of the interview schedule are largely summarized in Table IV. The responses to the final question in this section indicated that the assistant superintendents feel that there is a significant difference between their position and that of the superintendent as far as the possibility of promoting the welfare of the teaching staff is concerned. A considerable number of interviewees expressed the opinion that the incumbent of the position of assistant superintendent is in a superior position to assist teachers with personal problems, professional difficulties, and to resolve parent-teacher conflicts than is the superintendent. This superiority of position is attributed to a variety of causes ranging from simply having more time available to a more complex notion regarding the inspectorial traditions attached to the position of superintendent.

The portion of the interview which dealt with pupil personnel and guidance yielded the objective information summarized in Table V, page 36. The questions concerning the degree of participation in the various programs involved in this area of activity elicited answers which may

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY OF POSITIVE RESPONSES BY ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENTS TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING
THE SELECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF
SCHOOL PERSONNEL
N = 11

Question	Frequency of Positive Response
Do you select and hire teachers?	5
Do you place teachers?	6
Do you select and place principals?	5
Do you select and place other school personnel?	4

TABLE V

FREQUENCY OF POSITIVE RESPONSES BY ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENTS TO SELECTED QUESTIONS
CONCERNING PUPIL PERSONNEL AND
GUIDANCE ACTIVITIES
N = 11

Question	Frequency of Positive Response
Are you responsible for a program to orient beginning pupils?	6
Are you responsible for an intelligence and aptitude testing program?	8
Do you keep records in the Divisional office of ability and achievement test results?	5
Are you responsible for a vocational guidance program?	4

be summed up as follows. Participation in the programs designed to help orient beginning pupils is ordinarily limited to organizational work as the highest degree ranging through assistance to principals, to advice, to no participation. It appears to be a very important activity of one assistant superintendent who has developed a comprehensive program of work with the parents of beginning pupils. Participation in aptitude and intelligence testing is quite wide spread and significant. The degree of participation in this field ranges from the extreme case where the assistant superintendent administers, scores, and interprets the tests through varying degrees of administrative responsibility to no actual participation in this phase of educational work. The extent of participation in vocational guidance is also varied. A few assistant superintendents actually counsel students but in most instances participation is limited to a more general service such as arranging for career days. Promotion of pupils is a responsibility which is usually shared with the superintendent. The type of service is usually advisory and is concerned largely with deviant cases, both the very superior and those whose promotion is dependent on other factors than academic success. One assistant superintendent has assumed considerable responsibility in this field. He has developed a comprehensive and objective policy for determining the

requirements necessary for promotion.

The questions dealing with administration, organization and finance are summarized in Table VI. Some of the qualifications attached to a number of the positive responses are significant. There seems to be quite a strong current of feeling that the advice of the assistant superintendent on major monetary matters does not greatly affect those who have the responsibility for making decisions. It was difficult for the interviewees to assess their influence on decision makers but very few seemed to feel that their advice was an important factor. The interviewer attempted throughout this section to have the interviewee respond positively only if he felt that his advice was considered seriously and was not requested merely as a courtesy.

The responses to the first four questions concerning work in the field of public relations are summarized in Table VII, page 41. The responses were scored by the interviewer on a scale ranging from five points for a major effort down to zero for no activity. The highest possible score for any category is fifty-five. Most interviewees indicated that they felt they contributed significantly to a public relations function through membership in service clubs, personal contact and through their availability as a mediator of disputes. One assistant superintendent carried out a planned program of parent visitation for the

TABLE VI

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS TO
 QUESTIONS CONCERNING ADMINISTRATION,
 ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE
 N = 11

Question	Frequency of Positive Answers	Frequency of Negative Answers
Do you advise on future building needs?	7	4
Does your advice play a major part in building decisions?	1	6
Do you select sites for new schools?	1	10
Are decisions made according to your advice?	0	0
Are you consulted concerning preliminary building plans?	7	2
Do you have the responsibility for the selection, ordering and distributing classroom supplies?	3	8
Do you administer the text-book plan?	3	8

TABLE VI (continued)

Question	Frequency of Positive Answers	Frequency of Negative Answers
Have you the responsibility for the selection and ordering of classroom aids?	8	3
Have you the responsibility for the efficiency of the maintenance program?	4	7
Are you consulted in connection with the preparation of the budget?	5	6
Is it your responsibility to plan for the future development of school facilities?	4	7

TABLE VII

RATING SCORES ON QUESTIONS PUT TO ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENTS CONCERNING PUBLIC
RELATIONS ACTIVITIES--MAXIMUM
SCORE ON ANY QUESTION - 55

Question	Score
Do you attempt to inform the public of the schools' work?	40
Do you attempt to interpret the Department's Acts and Regulations?	11
Do you speak at public gatherings on educational matters?	42
Do you prepare releases for publication through the press and radio?	24

express purpose of informing parents of school affairs.

The responses to the portion of the interview questions which dealt with the definition of duties revealed a good deal of unanimity. In nearly all cases it was reported that the duties of this officer were defined cooperatively by the superintendent and the assistant superintendent. One interviewee reported that his duties were defined by the Board in cooperation with the Chief

Superintendent and the superintendent. In most cases the definition was a development through operation rather than a pre-employment definition. No significant desire for changes in the responsibilities was indicated by the interviewees but several indicated that they felt that a clearer definition of the responsibilities would be desirable.

The relationship between the assistant superintendent and the Board, the superintendent and the principals, was found to be quite complex. Since, in all instances, the assistant is an employee of the Board he comes under the authority of the Board. However, in about one-half the cases this authority is fully delegated to the superintendent and it appears that in the remaining cases the assistant is a staff rather than a line officer to the Board. He is employed to do a job about which his employers know little and hence are not in a position to supervise effectively. In only two instances did interviewees indicate that they felt that their employing Boards were reasonably conversant with the assistant's responsibilities and problems. Again in only one case did an assistant feel that the public was aware of his function. In the one case where the Board and the public generally appear to be cognizant of the duties and problems of the assistant this assistant has been employed in this position for ten years.

On the other hand all the interviewees expressed the view that their services were generally understood and accepted by the teachers. Most indicated that teachers accepted the assistant as a friend and adviser with only slight overtones of an inspectorial function. This acceptance generally has grown with the length of time the position has been established regardless of whether the same person was incumbent in the position or not.

The relationship between the assistant superintendent and the teachers' professional organization as revealed by the interviewees was also found to be quite complex. While eight out of eleven interviewees were found to be members of the Alberta Teachers' Association, none of the interviewees indicated they felt that they were in a position to take an active part in the affairs of this organization. Most did not regularly attend meetings nor did they participate in salary discussions. However, the view was often expressed that being a member was advantageous from the point of view of rapport. The opinion was also expressed that membership provided an opportunity for democratic leadership and provided a needed avenue for liaison between teachers and the Board. Of those who were not members, two expressed the view that membership would have hampered them in performing what they considered to be their function. One stated that he was a "Board man" implying that he must

be in opposition to the teachers' organization.

The final section of the interview provided information which is summarized in Table VIII. The last question concerning the interviewee's conception of this position in the educational hierarchy produced few objective replies but was most revealing as far as attitudes are concerned. In the judgement of the interviewer the replies indicated that the incumbents generally felt that such an officer is necessary to fill a need for a different kind of supervision than has been or perhaps can be provided by the provincially appointed superintendent. The two positions were considered complementary with experience in either position valuable to a prospective incumbent of the other. The view was often expressed that the employment of both a superintendent by the province and an assistant superintendent by the Board is superior to the division of an area into two superintendencies. Since the definitions of the duties varied and were nearly always determined in cooperation with the superintendent no consensus was possible as to whether the position should be termed a stepping stone, terminal, or unique.

TABLE VIII

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE
INCUMBENTS OF THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENT IN ALBERTA DURING
THE SCHOOL YEAR 1959-60

Characteristic	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Age	29 years	56	41.3
Teaching Experience	7 years	33	14.9
Experience as a principal	0 years	22	7.6
Supervisory experience other than as a principal	1 year	21	4.5
Highest degree held	no degree	Ph.D.	(Mode) M.Ed.
Years of training	4 years	10	6.0
Salary per Annum	\$6,900	\$10,500	\$8,540
Expense Allowance	10¢ per mile	12¢ per mile	12¢ per mile

In eight of eleven cases the hours and holidays of the assistant superintendent were the same or similar to those of the superintendent. In the remaining cases they were the same as those of teachers.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter will be concerned with an analysis of the data described in the previous chapter. This analysis will take into account the criteria set out in Chapter II, pages 13 and 14. The data recorded in Chapter IV provides the framework for a description of the role of the assistant superintendent. This chapter is an attempt to vitalize this framework. While it will of necessity be of a somewhat more subjective nature than the description contained in the preceding pages every precaution will be taken to base this analysis on the facts obtained through the research.

Purpose of the organization. The data do not directly indicate the purpose of the social organization to which the assistant superintendent belongs. However, this purpose is well known and may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. The larger organization, which includes the Provincial Legislature, the Cabinet, the Minister of Education, the Department of Education, and the School Boards and School Committees of the province, has the over-all purpose of providing the physical facilities, defining the aims and general content of the educational enterprise, selecting and furthering the training of the personnel and

in general exercising control over educational matters within the provincial boundaries.

2. The Divisional Boards or County School Committees have specific purposes which are implied in the School Act in the sections dealing with the duties of these Boards.²⁰ These duties which include the administration of the Division, regulation with regard to instruction, provision of facilities, regulation with regard to school management and discipline, provision for the health and welfare of the pupils, and general supervision and control over the schools indicate the purposes of these Boards. These purposes are specifically, to provide facilities and materials for instruction, to employ and supervise teachers, to organize, finance and administer the school affairs within their boundaries, and to set out educational policies within the limits of their powers.

Purpose of the assistant superintendent. In achieving the purposes indicated above these Boards must consult with the provincially appointed superintendent. They may also employ a person or persons, whom we have designated as assistant superintendents, to assist them in achieving

²⁰Government of the Province of Alberta, The School Act, Chapter 297 of The Revised Statutes of Alberta, 1955 and amendments, Part VI et seq.

their purposes. The results of Finlay's study²¹ indicate that Boards expect the superintendent to assist them in discharging their responsibilities with respect to areas which we have termed, Instructional Leadership, Selection and Management of Teaching Personnel, Pupil Personnel and Guidance, Administration, Organization and Finance, and Public Relations. It was hypothesized in designing this study that assistant superintendents would not be required to serve purposes not included in these areas. The data and the discussions held with both superintendents and with assistant superintendents indicate generally that their purposes lie within these areas. In all but one instance it was found that the purposes of the assistant superintendent did not range beyond these areas. In this one instance the assistant superintendent was designated as Attendance Officer. The data, however, indicates that the purpose of the assistant superintendent is generally limited to the areas of Instructional Leadership, Public Relations and Pupil Guidance. While instances of the acceptance of responsibility in the other two fields may be noted the general tenor of the responses and the objective data indicates that the purpose of the office of assistant superintendent is largely to improve the educational

²¹Finlay, op. cit.

situation within the school and to assist in informing the public of the educational situation in order to enlist support.

Needs and expectations of Boards and superintendents.

The changing role of the superintendent, influenced by the reorganization of school government and the development of educational theory, has helped to develop a need for assistance for this officer. The idea that instruction should be improved rather than merely measured raised problems of time as well as problems of relationships. The development of larger units of administration also increased the demands on the time and services of the superintendent. These demands arose out of the changing functions of the School Boards and the resulting increase in the expectations of these bodies for the superintendent. If a centralized school was to have advantages over a collection of one room schools more must be expected of the supervisory and administrative staff than just inspection or evaluation. Briggs and Justman suggest that supervision should attempt

1. To help teachers see more clearly the real ends of education, and the special role of the school in working toward these ends.
2. To help teachers see more clearly the problems and needs of young people, and to help them provide, as far as possible, for these needs.
3. To provide effective leadership, in fostering harmonious and cooperative staff relations, in stimulating professional in-service growth of teachers, and in bringing the school closer to the community.

4. To build strong group morale, and to unify teachers into an effective team, working with intelligent and appreciative cooperation to achieve the same general ends.
5. To ascertain the work for which each teacher is most suited, to assign him to such work, and to encourage him to develop further his capabilities in any promising directions.
6. To help teachers to develop greater competence in teaching.
7. To evaluate the results of each teacher's efforts in terms of pupil growth toward approved ideals.
8. To induct beginning teachers into the school and into the profession.
9. To assist teachers in diagnosing the learning difficulties of pupils and to help in planning effective remedial instruction.
10. To help interpret the school program to the community so that the public may understand and aid in the school's efforts.
11. To share with the public the problems of the school so as to get suggestions for their solution.
12. To protect teachers from unreasonable demands by the public on their time and energies, and from unwarranted criticism.²²

It appears from the data obtained from the assistant superintendents employed by Divisional Boards and County School Committees that they feel that their supervising superintendents expect them to contribute to the satisfaction of this need for adequate supervision as defined by Briggs and Justman. Some superintendents have broader concepts of their Board's expectations than this concern with supervision as indicated by the numbers who involve

²²Thomas H. Briggs and Joseph Justman, Improving Instruction Through Supervision, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1952, pp. 12-14, as cited by Fred C. Ayer, in Fundamentals of Instructional Supervision, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1954, pp. 5-6.

their assistants in administration as apart from supervision. However, even in this field the assistant superintendent is expected to be concerned mainly with items related to instruction in the classroom and not with such things as pupil transportation or heating systems.

Consensus of expectations of assistant superintendents. A good deal of uncertainty relative to what was expected of them by their employers and their supervisors was indicated by the interviewees. This uncertainty did not appear to carry over into the interviewees' self-expectations. In every instance the incumbents of this position expected this position to offer opportunities to exert instructional leadership and opportunities to exert a positive influence on the learning situation within the schools. This is what the interviewees expected the position to offer. Numerous instances arose during the interviews which indicated that these expectations were not being fully realized. Practically all the interviewees expressed satisfaction with the understanding and acceptance of the position by the teachers but as indicated by the data recorded on page 42 very few assistant superintendents felt that their employers or the public understood their position. This lack of understanding and precise definition of duties appears to have a tendency to limit the possibility of

realizing their expectations. A number of interviewees indicated that they did not believe their advice had very much effect on decision making and as a result limited their effectiveness in improving the learning situation. On the whole the expectations of the incumbents are quite definite but the full realization of these expectations will depend on better understanding by the employing Boards of these expectations and of their own expectations with regard to this position.

Conflicts between role definitions. Since the duties of the assistant superintendent have either been worked out cooperatively with the superintendent or have developed through operation there appears to be little conflict between the definition of the role as held by the assistant and that held by the superintendent. None of the interviewees indicated that there is a conflict between the role definition of the position held by the incumbents of the position and that held by teachers. Many reported that on first taking up the position they met with some misunderstanding by the teachers. They were looked upon as an additional inspector. It did not appear to be difficult for the incumbent to gain the confidence of the teaching body. There does appear to be some conflict between the role definitions for the position as held by the assistants and

that held by employing Boards. This appears to be the result of a lack of understanding of the nature and possible effects of supervision by Board members. It appears that many Board members expect a more startling change of behavior on the part of teachers as a result of being more closely supervised. There also seems to be an underlying conflict between the teaching profession in Alberta and Board members. This conflict creates a problem of identification for the assistant superintendent. In order to exercise effectively democratic supervision it would appear that he should identify himself rather closely with the teaching body. This involves membership in the professional organization and generally that he be known to the teachers as their friend and confidant. Few Board members appear to feel that this is necessary. They seem to feel that the superintendent and the assistant superintendent should be on their "side". This indicates that they tend to define the role of the assistant superintendent in terms of authority whereas most assistant superintendents appear to define their role in terms of leadership. This implicit conflict in role definition will probably continue until the nature of the supervisory process is much better understood by those elected to Divisional Boards and County Councils.

Individuality of the role. Since this is a pro-

fessional role and one about which the employer does not appear to be well informed one can expect considerable individual differences in the manner in which the role is played. The definition of the role is in all cases co-operatively worked out with the superintendent. Such a method of role definition will superimpose the individuality of the superintendent and the assistant superintendent on the definition of the role for that particular time and place. There will be some variation in the role definition and in role conflict as the personnel involved change. These variations will generally be of a superficial nature but as is evidenced by the discontinuance of the position in a few instances they may be sufficient to destroy the value of the position under certain circumstances. It is important that this individuality of role be maintained in order to make the best use of the personnel but the fact that there is individuality in role definition should be understood so as to prevent the loss of a valuable service due to the interactions of individuals.

Departmental control. In the first few pages of this thesis a number of sub-problems were listed as requiring investigation as the analysis of the role of the assistant superintendent was developed. The first four of these sub-problems have been discussed. The fifth sub-problem

concerned the control exerted by the Department of Education over the selection, appointment, and function of these officers. The control exercised by the Department in this regard is described in Subsection (1) (b) of Section 1 of the Grant Regulations. This control is exercised through the grant for teachers' salaries and states that "Teachers' salaries shall include salaries of supervisors of instruction who have been appointed with the approval of the Minister".²³ This control is exercised through the Chief Superintendent but may be avoided if a Divisional Board sees fit to employ such an individual without the benefit of grant toward the payment of salary. The Department of Education through the Chief Superintendent has provided Boards with the names of suitable applicants for this position and has passed on information and recommendations concerning the role to be played by the incumbents of this position. The question of Departmental control over this position has not yet become very clear. It will perhaps receive further consideration if and when the position becomes more widely established.

Personal and professional characteristics of assistant superintendents. The facts concerning the age, experience, training and remuneration of these officers was presented

²³Government of the Province of Alberta, Grant Regulations, (Orders-in-Council No. 637/59, 1068/59, 676/60, 1197/60, p. 1.

in Table VIII, page 45. These figures do little to indicate the type of professional person likely to accept one of these positions. There is no typical assistant superintendent. There are individuals who are relatively young and who expect to use this experience to further their professional careers. There are also very experienced individuals who have occupied positions carrying greater prestige but who have accepted these positions because they felt that they offered a greater opportunity for professional service in more permanent surroundings. This type of individual indicated to the interviewer that he accepted this position because of the leadership possibilities rather than the possibility of status or authority. In some instances the salary offered appears to be an attraction although there are also instances of individuals accepting this position at a lower salary than they received previously. There are also instances of individuals leaving this position for other positions paying less. It is certain that this position is being occupied by a group of well trained, experienced, and sincere educators. Whether it can be classed as a terminal position to be occupied by persons satisfied to make it their work for the remainder of their professional careers or whether it should be classed as a position to be occupied by those seeking experience to be used in other positions one can not state from the evidence available. There are

those of each category presently occupying the position.

CHAPTER VI

SYNTHESIS, IMPLICATIONS, FURTHER RESEARCH

This final chapter will include an attempt to put together the pieces which have been gathered and examined in the previous chapters. This might be called a role synthesis or a role consensus. It should be borne in mind that the major portion of the data obtained came from the incumbents of the position. For this reason this synthesis may not be completely adequate. Some of the implications arising out of this inadequacy will be suggested. An attempt will also be made to suggest areas where further research might contribute to a more complete understanding of the role of this officer and of the supervisory situation as it pertains to Alberta School Divisions and Counties.

Synthesis of the role of assistant superintendent.

As is indicated by the training and experience of the incumbents of this position the role of assistant superintendent is a professional role. As it is a professional role it can not be described in set or limited terms but may only be synthesized within rather broad limits. The nature of the professional individuals involved, their expectations and need dispositions, the expectations and need dispositions of the employing Boards and supervising superintendents and

the particular community being served will all have their influence on the limits of the role to be played by the assistant superintendent. However, one may set out certain generalizations which will apply to most situations in which an assistant superintendent is involved.

While assistant superintendents are employed to satisfy a variety of needs it appears to be generally accepted that the major responsibilities of these officers lie in improving the existing learning situation using the facilities and personnel provided. They do not appear to be expected to exert much influence on the provision of facilities, the improvement of facilities nor on the selection of personnel but rather are to attempt to improve the efficiency of the educational process with the resources at hand. This might be called an operational rather than a policy making function. They are generally expected to assist in the improvement of the instruction offered by the staff provided and to assist this staff to obtain the maximum development of the pupils of the area. Together with this operational function they appear to be expected to assist in the publicizing of the problems and achievements within the school system. The means used to achieve the ends indicated above may be classed as influencing rather than directing. They are expected by the teachers and by themselves and to a certain extent by their employers to exert

leadership rather than to exercise authority. They are expected to take the initiative in instructional improvement but generally are limited with regard to the evaluation of instruction. They are expected to evaluate instruction in order to assist in its improvement but not to evaluate instructors for personnel purposes. Staff welfare lies within their province but decisions regarding staff employment, placement and policy generally do not fall within their domain.

With regard to obtaining the maximum development of the pupils within the schools the responsibility of the assistant superintendent lies generally at the organizational level. In most instances he is expected to see that orientation, testing, and guidance programs are carried out. He provides advice, materials, and encouragement but is not generally expected to participate directly in these programs. In the evaluation of pupil progress and promotion he is expected to provide professional advice and assistance but does not usually accept responsibility for decisions.

In the administration field the assistant superintendent is not generally considered as an executive officer of the Board. While his advice is sometimes sought and his influence is probably often felt he is not expected to assume responsibility for the planning or provision of

facilities. He usually plays an important part in decisions concerning instructional supplies and aids but seldom does he execute these decisions. Only in isolated instances does this officer have any concern with buildings, their planning, construction and maintenance. What little responsibility he does have lies in the fact that he is available for consultation. His influence on budgeting is also generally limited to consultation about supplies and aids.

There is a considerable degree of consensus relative to the position of the assistant superintendent in the educational structure of Alberta School Divisions and Counties. This officer is employed generally to assist the superintendent to perform an operational function in the field of instructional improvement. The specific duties are usually defined cooperatively by the superintendent, the assistant superintendent and occasionally the Board. Advice as to the potential function is sometimes obtained from the Chief Superintendent and from other Boards who employ assistant superintendents. The position of this officer in the hierarchy is difficult to describe. He is subject to control by the Board but generally this control is not exercised. The professional leadership aspect of his role tends to preclude the necessity of direction. In most cases the assistant superintendent has authority over the principals but again the nature of the role precludes the

necessity of exercising this authority. One might say that in general this officer lies outside the normal chain of command and that his value is enhanced by this isolation from the authoritative line. He is a staff officer to all levels from the student to trustee.

The acceptance of the assistant superintendent by those in counter positions depends to a great extent on the level of understanding of the position attained by these people. The teachers generally appear to accept this officer as a leader. The relationship between the principal and the assistant superintendent is one which requires more study. One might question whether, if the principal is satisfactorily filling his role, a role remains for the assistant superintendent. Under present conditions relative to the training, work load, and attitude of principals it appears that these officers are not capable of adequately performing their ideal role. If this is the case then assistant superintendents may help to satisfy the need created by this inadequacy. As a matter of record the data provides no indication of serious conflict between a principal and an assistant superintendent. The acceptance of the assistant superintendent by the Boards and by the public generally leaves much to be desired. As mentioned earlier in the analysis of the data there appears to be a lack of real understanding of the professional leadership

function. The assistant superintendent is accepted with a degree of reservation by the teachers' professional organization. While teachers individually tend to accept the assistant superintendent as their friend and advisor, collectively there is a degree of distrust. This distrust apparently derives from the economic conflict between Boards and the Alberta Teachers' Association. In general, one might say that in synthesizing the role of the assistant superintendent the degree of acceptance of this officer by those in counter positions is varied and not conducive to the greatest possible contribution by this officer.

Implications of this study. The synthesis of the role of the assistant superintendent indicates that at least under some circumstances the employment of such an officer by a Divisional Board or a County School Committee serves a useful purpose. The main implication of this is that neither the provincially appointed superintendents nor the principals are adequately satisfying or can adequately satisfy the need for democratic supervision or educational leadership in all areas. The basis for this inadequacy may lie in many factors. Some of these factors may include the size of the area for which a superintendent is responsible, the historic attitudes toward his position, the expectations held for him by Boards, teachers and the Department, the

supply of trained personnel available for appointment as principals, the expectations held for principals, and many other factors.

A second indication arising out of this synthesis is that the people of Alberta are not being adequately educated with regard to the developments in educational supervision. This implies that the public relations program of professional educators is not being successful in keeping the public up to date with developments in this field. It does not appear that the public or their elected representatives on School Boards or County Councils have an adequate understanding of the possibilities inherent in the educational leadership role. This lack of understanding places restrictions on the efficiency of all supervisory activity.

It has been mentioned in other places in this study that there appears to be a serious conflict between the teachers' professional organization in Alberta and the Divisional Boards and School Committees. This implies that there is a failure in communication between these bodies. This conflict also places restrictions on the efficiency of supervisory activity. While this conflict may have its roots in economics the effects are felt in the expectancies held by the public and by Boards for principals, assistant superintendents, and superintendents as far as the results

of supervision are concerned. The demands for higher salaries for teachers are countered by demands for greater efficiency. Boards apparently are under the impression that this greater efficiency can be achieved by direct authoritative action by those in supervisory positions. This impression is probably a result of the unsuccessful public relations program of professional educators and the conflict arising out of poor communication between the Alberta Teachers' Association and the trustees.

Need for further research. It must be borne in mind that this analysis of the role of the assistant superintendent is based on data obtained largely from the present incumbents of the position. It is obvious that for a more adequate understanding of this role some further research is necessary into the expectations held for this officer by persons occupying counter positions. Perhaps this research should be delayed until the office has existed long enough for these persons to develop clear cut expectations.

As has been indicated by the discussion immediately preceding this section there appears to be a need for further research into the roles of both the Divisional superintendent and the principal of the Divisional school. This research should perhaps be directed toward determining the expectations held by these officers with regard to their

leadership functions.

There also seems to be a need for research into the efficiency of the means of communication between the professional and the layman. This research should perhaps be directed towards determining the most effective means of communicating the concepts involved in democratic supervision.

Conclusion. This study indicates that an increasing number of well trained, experienced, and successful professional educators are being employed as assistant superintendents in the divisions and counties of Alberta. The primary function of these officers appears to be to assist in the improvement of the learning situation within the classroom. The philosophy behind their mode of operation appears to be that of democratic leadership. In most instances the factors which appear to be most effective in limiting their success lie in the lack of understanding of this philosophy by employers and the public generally. It does not appear to be possible on the evidence available at this time to state whether or not the employment of assistant superintendents is the most effective or economical way to achieve the purpose of improving the learning situation. It does appear reasonably certain that the assistant superintendents presently employed are contributing substantially toward the achievement of this goal.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR USE IN THE STUDY OF THE ROLE
OF THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT IN ALBERTA
SCHOOL DIVISIONS AND COUNTIES

The purposes that the investigator hoped to attain through these interviews were as follows:

1. The investigator wished the interviewees to select and rank the areas in which he performs a supervisory or administrative function from an accepted list of supervisory or administrative areas.
2. The investigator wished to learn of some of the specific kinds of supervisory or administrative acts performed by the interviewees.
3. The investigator wanted the interviewees to express themselves concerning the role they feel they should fill.
4. The investigator wanted to explore the relationships between the interviewees and other persons connected with the educational enterprise of the division.
5. The investigator wanted the interviewee to describe his relationship with the teachers' professional organization.
6. The investigator wanted to learn of the personal and professional attributes of the interviewees.

To achieve the first objective the interviewees were asked to indicate in which of the following areas they are active, the degree of their responsibility, and to rank these

areas in order of importance as far as their responsibility is concerned.

Areas of responsibility.

A. Instructional Leadership.

Active_____? Degree of responsibility_____? Rank_____?

B. Selection and Management of Teaching Personnel.

Active_____? Degree of responsibility_____? Rank_____?

C. Pupil Personnel and Guidance.

Active_____? Degree of responsibility_____? Rank_____?

D. Administration, Organization and Finance.

Active_____? Degree of responsibility_____? Rank_____?

E. Public Relations

Active_____? Degree of responsibility_____? Rank_____?

To achieve the second objective the interviewees were asked to answer the following questions concerning the areas in which they accepted responsibility.

A. Instructional Leadership.

1. Do you visit classrooms and confer with teachers in an attempt to improve instruction? _____
2. Is this done on your own initiative, direction of the superintendent, teacher invitation, or some combination?
3. Do you organize teacher study groups, projects or institutes? _____
4. Is this done on your own initiative, superintendent's direction, or on teacher invitation? _____

5. Do you evaluate the work of teachers and write reports?
6. Do you participate or exert leadership in curriculum interpretation and development? _____
7. Do you participate in planning the program of instruction to be offered in the high schools? _____
8. Do you play an active role in the Principals' Association?
9. Are there any other ways in which you exert Instructional Leadership?

B. Selection and Management of Teaching Personnel.

1. Do you select, hire, and place teachers? _____
2. Do you select and place principals? _____
3. Have you responsibilities for the selection and placement of other employees?
4. Are there any particular ways that your office is especially effective in promoting the welfare of the teaching staff? _____

C. Pupil Personnel and Guidance.

1. Are you responsible for a program to orient beginning pupils? _____
2. To what extent do you participate in this orientation?
3. Are you responsible for an intelligence and aptitude testing program? _____
4. To what extent do you participate in this program?

5. Do you keep records in the divisional office of ability and achievement test results? _____
6. Are you responsible for a vocational guidance program?
7. To what extent do you participate in this program?
8. To what extent are you involved in decisions regarding the promotion of individual pupils? _____

D. Administration, Organization, and Finance.

1. Do you advise on future building needs? _____
2. Does your advice play a major part in building decisions?
3. Do you select sites for new schools? _____
4. Are decisions made according to your advice? _____
5. Are you consulted concerning preliminary building plans?
6. Do you have the responsibility for the selection, ordering, and distributing classroom supplies? _____
7. Do you administer the text book plan? _____
8. Have you the responsibility for the selection and ordering of classroom aids? _____
9. Have you the responsibility for the efficiency of the maintenance program? _____
10. Are you consulted in connection with the preparation of the budget? _____
11. Is it your responsibility to plan for the future development of the school facilities? _____

E. Public Relations.

1. Do you attempt to inform the public of the school's

work?

2. Do you attempt to interpret the Department's Acts and Regulations?
3. Do you speak at public gatherings on educational matters?
4. Do you prepare releases for publication through the press or radio?
5. Are there other ways that you perform a public relations function?

To achieve the third objective the following questions were asked.

1. How or by whom were your duties defined?
2. If you were given a free hand in defining the responsibilities of an assistant superintendent what changes would you make?
3. Would any changes you might make affect the ranking you made in the first part of the interview?

To achieve the fourth objective the following questions were asked.

1. Could you describe the supervisory and administrative set up in your Division according to a line and staff diagram?
2. Please indicate the relative acceptance by the teachers of an additional supervisory officer in your position.

3. Do you feel that the Board understands your responsibilities and problems?
4. Is the public aware of your position and function?

To achieve the fifth objective the following questions were asked.

1. Are you a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association?
2. Please describe your acceptance and position relative to this organization.

The following questions refer to the personal and professional characteristics of the incumbents of the position of assistant superintendent.

1. Age_____?
2. Teaching experience?_____?
3. Principal experience_____?
4. Experience in this type of position _____?
5. Professional training _____years? Degrees_____?
6. Present salary _____? Expense allowance _____?
7. Hours and holidays _____?
8. Please outline the way you feel that the position of assistant superintendent fits into the educational hierarchy. Is it a stepping stone or a terminal type of position?

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